



SHOT TALK



National Infant Immunization Week, April 14-20, 2002

One of the most remarkable public health achievements of the 20th century was and continues to be the success of immunizations. In the United States, most vaccine-preventable diseases have been reduced by more than 99 percent since the introduction of vaccines. Nationally we have achieved our goal of 90 percent coverage for most individual childhood vaccines, and 78 percent of the nation's children have been fully immunized by the time they are two. As impressive as these accomplishments are there is still work to be done. In the most recent National Immunization Survey (NIS) conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only 74% of Texas children had completed the 4-3-1 series of vaccines by 19 through 35 months of age.

The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (SAMHD), along with the Texas Department of Health (TDH) Immunization Division, faces many challenges and opportunities to improve immunization rates in San Antonio, Bexar County, and Texas.

In 1994, the President launched the Childhood Immunization Initiative and declared "National Infant Immunization Week" (NIIW) the third week in April. Communities across the country use this week to increase awareness, and access to immunization services. As a result, nationwide immunization rates have risen; low cost or free vaccines have become more

accessible to low-income and uninsured families; community outreach, participation, and partnerships between public and private sectors have increased, and systems for monitoring disease and vaccinations have improved.

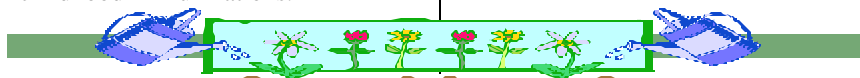
The SAMHD will celebrate NIIW 2002 by hosting the Fifth Annual Vaccines for Children Appreciation Breakfast on April 18, 2002 at the Omni Hotel. The keynote speaker for the breakfast features William Atkinson, MD, MPH, Medical Epidemiologist from the CDC. Mr. Frank Blalock, Assistant Director, of the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, will be the moderator. The Breakfast will be served at 7:30 a.m. Opening remarks and Dr. Atkinson's keynote address will follow. All VFC providers will receive their invitations in late March. To hear more about the importance of timely immunizations for infants and toddlers, and the control of vaccine-preventable diseases, VFC Providers and their staff representatives are urged to make plans to attend this special and informative event. In commemoration of NIIW the SAMHD will also host activities throughout the week at local clinics and in the community to maintain awareness about the importance of childhood immunizations.

"Shots Across Texas" & Schlitterbahn

The Texas Department of Health's "Shots Across Texas" & Schlitterbahn along with the SAMHD are sponsoring a NEW event called "The Texas 2-Step" April 15 – April 19, during NIIW. On April 18 and 19 the SAMHD is offering all needed immunizations at no charge for infants and children to 5 years at the Fredericksburg Road and the Downtown Immunization Clinic. Here is how it works:

Step 1: Take your infant or child to either the SAMHD's Fredericksburg Road or Downtown Immunization Clinics for FREE immunizations on April 18 and 19. Each eligible child immunized will receive a voucher for a free all-day ticket to Schlitterbahn, with the purchase of one full-price, all-day adult ticket.

Step 2: Take your infant or child to either Schlitterbahn Waterpark for a FREE Sunday of fun through May! The voucher can be used on any Sunday from April 28 through May 26, 2002, at any Schlitterbahn Waterpark location. For more information about this event, call Pamela C. Williams, Infant Action Plan Coordinator at (210) 207-2869 or the Texas Department of Health at 1-800-41-SHOTS for additional information.



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Vaccine Shortages and ACIP Recommendations

A temporary shortage of Varicella (VARIVAX®) and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) (M-M-R II®) vaccines in the United States has resulted from two voluntary interruptions to manufacturing operations by Merck & Co., Inc. These interruptions were attributed to voluntary modifications Merck made in response to issues raised by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) during a routine "Good Manufacturing Practices" inspection, and the longer than expected alterations to a production facility. Consequently, these disruptions have had substantial impacts on current vaccine production and supplies. Although the duration of the vaccine shortages for Varivax® and MMR is uncertain, the manufacturer predicts that these issues could be resolved by late spring or early summer 2002. In the meantime, Merck estimates an average of 60+ days to fill orders that have already been placed. Because of these issues, the SAMHD encourages all health care providers to continue to place orders for these products to ensure that they are in the "order/back order cycle" and not wait until after the shortages have been resolved to order.

Interim ACIP Recommendations for Use of Varicella and MMR Vaccines

Varicella is a more severe disease among adolescents and adults however the highest incidence of this disease is among elementary school aged-children. Until adequate supplies of Varicella vaccine are available, the ACIP recommends that all vaccine providers who are experiencing supply problems in the United States delay administration of the routine childhood Varicella vaccine dose from age 12--18 months until age 18--24 months. If the shortage persists in severity after delaying administration until 24 months of age, SAMHD will recommend the further prioritization of vaccine use and thus, send out new recommendations for use (highest to

lowest priority) of Varivax® for susceptible persons.

The ACIP recommends administering two doses of MMR vaccine, separated by at least one month and administered on or after the first birthday, to those children and adolescents who lack adequate documentation of vaccination or other acceptable evidence of immunity. The first dose is recommended at age 12--15 months and the second dose at age 4--6 years. Although the ACIP has made interim recommendations to defer the second dose of MMR if sufficient amounts of MMR vaccine are not available to implement ACIP recommendations, only the State Board of Health can issue a deferment for state mandated school entrance requirements for vaccination. At this time, the Texas Department of Health has not deferred the MMR or Varicella vaccine for school entry. Moreover, because of the severity of measles in young children, providers should not delay administration of the first dose of the MMR series.

Tracking and Recall

Records should be maintained by the provider or physician for children who experience a delay in administration of any vaccine in short supply so they can be recalled when vaccine becomes available. The latest information about vaccine supply issues is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/news/shortages>.

Effects of Shortages on SAMHD

The San Antonio Metropolitan Health District has been equally affected by these nationwide vaccine shortages (also including DTaP and Prevnar), and will continue to supply our Vaccines for Children (VFC) providers with vaccine based on our current supplies. The SAMHD Immunization Division recommends that providers who are considering implementing any of the ACIP recommendations base their decisions on their own individual inventory conditions. The

Immunization Division would like to emphasize that during these periods of shortages, **to not refer your patients to the SAMHD for vaccination.** This practice also has a detrimental affect in that it decreases the vaccine that will be available for distribution to all VFC providers. We know that these shortages are creating hardships for everyone, but vaccine supplies allocated for SAMHD clinics cannot support the additional patient load.

Vaccine Update

The SAMHD Immunization Division has just received a limited supply of Td vaccine and will resume partial distribution to our clinics and VFC providers for their patients who are due for their Td booster. Although the supplies are not yet plentiful, we suggest recalling those patients that you deferred for the Td school booster during the past school year. Please note that this does not alter the current Td Deferral policy issued by TDH last year.

The SAMHD VFC Program expects small amounts of Prevnar to arrive. Consequently, deliveries of Prevnar to VFC providers will continue to be less than originally ordered. Please prioritize the use of this vaccine. Provider's vaccine orders and VFC vaccine inventory will be closely monitored to ensure appropriate use of VFC vaccine. All questions and concern about the VFC Program and/or vaccine supplies should be directed to Vivian Flores, VFC Coordinator (207-2868) or Anthony Johnson, Vaccine Manager (921-1178).

Update - Texas School Entry Requirements

Td deferral for adolescents 11-14 years of age continues for 2002-03 School Year.

Effective August 1, 2003, children born on or after September 2, 1992, attending school or child-care facilities in Bexar, Grayson, Moore, Nueces, Potter, Randall, and



Terry counties, will be required to be vaccinated against hepatitis A vaccine, administered on or after their second birthday.

Vaccine Shortage Impacts New Mothers

The temporary shortage of Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) Vaccine in the United States has affected new mothers that are Rubella susceptible. Records should be maintained for young women who are rubella susceptible and have delivered their babies but experience a delay in receiving the MMR vaccine. These patients should be recalled as soon as the vaccine becomes available.

The SAMHD Rubella Susceptible Program has a very limited amount of MMR vaccine for adults. This vaccine has been allocated to clients who are referred to this program from SAMHD clinics. Therefore, private providers who wish to refer their clients to the health department need to refer their patients to the SAMHD Foreign Travel/Adult Immunization Clinics to obtain the MMR vaccine. The cost for MMR vaccine from these clinics is \$45.00 a dose. Arrangements can be made for patients who demonstrate an inability to pay for the vaccine. For more information contact Rose Vasquez, LVN, Health Program Specialist at 207-2091.

Vaccines for Children Program Overview

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) created the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program as Section 1928 of the Social Security Act on August 10, 1993. Since its inception, it has become a critical element of the President's Childhood Immunization Initiative (CII). The VFC program, which began October 1, 1994, represents an unprecedented approach to improving vaccine availability nationwide by providing vaccine free of charge to VFC-

eligible children through public and private providers.

VFC Program Benefits:

► Provides public purchased vaccine, for eligible children, **at no charge** to public and private providers in all states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

► Automatically covers vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and approved by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

► Saves parents and enrolled providers out-of-pocket expenses for vaccine

► Eliminates vaccine cost as a barrier to immunizing eligible children.

► Reduces the practice of referring children from the private sector to the public sector for vaccination, keeping children in their medical home for comprehensive health care.

The goal is to ensure that no VFC-eligible child contracts a vaccine-preventable disease because of the parent's inability to pay for the vaccine or its administration.

The Vaccines for Children Program vaccine is available to enrolled providers for their patients under the age of 19 years of age that fall into one of the following categories:

- Medicaid Enrolled
- Uninsured
- Underinsured (has health insurance that does not cover immunizations)
- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- CHIP enrolled (SAMHD provides non-VFC vaccine for CHIP patients)

Welcome Aboard!

The VFC Program welcomes Bridget Gonzales to the VFC team. Ms. Gonzales will assume the vacant Health Program Specialist – VFC Educator position. The Quality Assurance/AFIX Program also has a new member. Please welcome Maria

Torres. Ms. Torres is a Health Program Specialist and she comes from the Health Education Division.

The following providers have joined the VFC Program since the last newsletter:

Shavano Family Practice and San Antonio Pediatric Associates – Houston Street.

To learn more about the VFC Program please contact Vivian Flores at 207-2868 or Bridget Gonzales at 207-2863.

QA/AFIX Progress Report

This has already been a productive year for the QA/AFIX team. Since January 1, 2002, the following providers have received a VFC site visit and or an AFIX assessment:

Bexar County Juvenile Detention Center, The Family Doctor Office, Dante P. Escalante Medical Office, Bishop Ernest T. Dixon Clinic, Guillermo I. Rocha, MD, Gonzaba Medical Group Northwest, Dr. Jocelyn James, Respite Care Medical Wellness Clinic, Office of Dr. Garcia, Christus Santa Rosa Family Health Center, Howard Family Practice, Dr. Molina-Rivera, South Texas Center for Pediatric Care, Elizabeth S. Brickman, M.D., David A. Ochoa, M.D., Porter Medical Associates, Alamo Pediatric Clinic, P.A., San Antonio Family Medical Clinic, Southwest Clinic, Family Doctor Office-Guadalupe Street, Dr. Abraham-Cox, Dr. Valerie Ostrower, University Family Health Center-SW, ABCD Pediatrics, and Dr. Gruesbech.

Congratulations to ABCD Pediatrics for achieving an immunization coverage rate of 92% for the 4:3:1:3:3 immunization series. This means that over 92% of the children visiting this clinic completed their required immunizations of 4 DTaP, 3 Polio, 1 MMR, 3 Hib and 3 HepB by 24 months of age.

Providers that have participated in the AFIX process have been encouraged to utilize assessment tools to simplify keeping patient's immunizations status up-to-date. The software is free of charge and the

VFC Program QA/AFIX section will assist with training and installation.

If you have any questions regarding the installation of assessment software, training, or wish to schedule a site visit, please contact Keith Mason, QA/AFIX Coordinator at 207-8142.

IAP Outreach 2001 Program Highlights

The Infant Action Project Outreach Program had a very productive year in 2001. The Outreach Program Supervisor, Gloria Johnson, reports that the Program participated in 53 health fairs, an increase of 96% from the previous year. The number of parents reached through the Outreach efforts increased considerably from 3,609 in 2000 to 6,708 this past year. A large number of immunization informational brochures and pamphlets were distributed at these events. Immunization staff were available to answer questions, issue copies of shot records, and serve as a resource.

While endeavoring to educate as many parents in our community as possible, the Outreach Program developed and implemented a series of presentations on "Vaccine-Preventable Diseases" that included a graphic slide presentation. These were conducted in both English and Spanish. Based on a parent survey following the program the presentations were very well received and have proven to be in high demand.

The Outreach Program would like to extend a heartfelt **Thank You** to all our collaborative partners, especially the AVANCE Early Head Start Program for their support and interest in promoting immunizations within our community.

For more information on the Outreach Program, contact Gloria Johnson, LVN at 207-6917.

Our Children are Counting on Us
Immunize for Healthy Lives !

Flu Season Still Upon Us

Influenza season is still active as San Antonio and the rest of the country experiences an increasing number of flu-related cases. The SAMHD Epidemiology Division has received over 100 culture-confirmed reports of influenza since mid-December 2001, making the 2001-2002 flu season significant and rather lengthy compared to last year.

As a result, the SAMHD administered an increased number of influenza doses. More than 26,300 doses of the influenza vaccine have been administered so far this year.

December through April are peak months for influenza activity during which a flu shot can help to reduce chances of contracting influenza. Individuals can still receive an influenza vaccination at any of the 17 SAMHD immunization clinics. The cost of a flu shot is \$10.00. Clients who have Medicare, Medicaid, University Health System CareLink, Community First, or CHIP are eligible to receive a flu shot at no cost. Pneumonia shots are also available through the SAMHD clinics for \$10.00. Medicare recipients can receive this vaccine at no cost. For a list of clinic locations and times, please call (210) 207-8750 or visit the SAMHD Immunization website www.sanantonio.gov/health/immweb

ACIP Sets 2002-03 Influenza Recommendations

On February 20, 2002, the ACIP voted on the 2002-03 influenza recommendations. New recommendations urge early flu vaccination of high-risk individuals in October, including children nine years of age and younger who have high-risk conditions. These recommendations will be published in the April 2002 issue of the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR).

Get an Early Start on Flu Vaccine Orders

It's not too early to start preparing for the 2002-2003 flu season. If you plan on providing flu shots to your clients the CDC recommends that

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you begin placing your vaccine orders in March or April, 2002. The price for a ten dose vial will average between \$65 to \$75.

Last year, providers reported various problems securing flu vaccine. To avoid these problems, the SAMHD suggests placing orders directly with one of the three flu vaccine manufacturers; Aventis - Pasteur, Wyeth, or Evans Vaccines.

Early manufacturer projections estimate that 88-93 million doses will be produced for the upcoming season. The vaccine will include the same A(H1N1) and A(H3N2) strains as the current vaccine, with the B component still to be determined. For help in locating a flu vaccine supplier, contact Rita Salazar, at (210) 207-8877.

Upcoming City Holidays

Fiesta San Jacinto

April 26, 2002

Memorial Day

May 27, 2002

Immunization Program Contacts

Program Operations: Mark Ritter, MHA	207-8794
Public Health Advisor: Thomas Finke, MPA	207-2870
Clinical Operations: Lynn Seeman, RN	207-8804
Hepatitis Program/Surveillance/Rabies: Nancy Walea, RN	207-2087
VFC Coordinator: Vivian Flores	207-2868
Vaccine Ordering: Anthony Johnson	921-1178
Infant Action Plan/WIC Linkage: Pamela Williams	207-2869
Vaccine Studies: Brenda Lemke, MHA	207-2859
Registry/Info. Systems: Walter Widish	207-8792
Adolescent/Adult Program: Rita Salazar	207-8877
AFIX/QA Program: Keith Mason	207-8142
Foreign Travel: Rebecca Prieto, RN	207-8872

SAMHD: www.samhd.org

TDH: www.tdh.state.tx.us

CDC: www.cdc.gov

IAC: www.immunize.org